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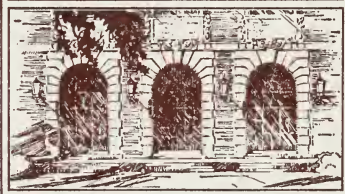
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W.R. Foster, comp. A Brief Survey of
LaSalle County, Illinois: Its Resources,
Industries and Growth. (1933)

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I.H.S.



A Brief Survey of
LaSalle County, Illinois
Its Resources, Industries and Growth

COMPILED BY
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COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

APPROVED BY
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1933

Important Facts About La Salle County, Illinois For Grammar Grade Pupils

NOTE. This material has been assembled in response to an urgent call from the schools for information concerning the organization, development, resources and industries of our county and it is sincerely hoped that it will not only be helpful in this respect but that it will engender a pride in local affairs that will ultimately redound to the benefit of the entire community. It is suggested that the material presented be discussed in conversational recitations so as to provoke further inquiry and that each pupil fill in at least one of the outline maps of the county with the more important facts.

LOCATION.

LaSalle County is located in the north central part of the state about 55 miles from the Indiana line; 60 miles from the Wisconsin line; and 60 miles from the nearest point on the Mississippi River. The 89th meridian of west longitude passes through its western part, crossing the Illinois River just east of Utica. The county lies between 40 deg. 56 min. and 41 deg. 40 min. north latitude and is 30 miles wide and 48 miles long.

As originally planned by the Ordinance of 1787, the northern boundary of Illinois would have been what is now the northern line of our county. But on the recommendation of Nathaniel Pope, our territorial delegate in 1818, Congress moved the boundary of the state 61 miles farther north to give it sufficient shore line on Lake Michigan for harbors.

ORGANIZATION.

January 15, 1831, Governor Reynolds approved an act of the state legislature which detached all of that portion of the northeastern part of the state lying east of the Third Principal Meridian and north of the south line of Township 29 North, from Peoria County and organized

it into two counties, naming them LaSalle and Cook. All of this territory for a width of eight townships east of the Third Principal Meridian was designated LaSalle County, and Ottawa, a straggling village on the Illinois River at the mouth of the Fox, was made the county seat. Originally then, LaSalle County was 48 miles wide east and west, and 108 miles long north and south, having an area of about 5,000 square miles, a trifle larger than the state of Connecticut. Before ten years had elapsed, however, eleven counties and parts of counties had been detached from it. See the map of Illinois for the location and names of the counties that were formerly a part of our county.

The county was named in honor of that intrepid French explorer, Robert Sieur de LaSalle, who conceived the idea of establishing a great federation of the inland tribes to counteract the Iroquois Confederation farther east and for the glory and enrichment of his native land. As a headquarters for controlling these Indian tribes and as a trading post for the exchange of goods for furs, he built Fort St. Louis at Starved Rock and placed it in charge of Tonti, his lieutenant, while LaSalle himself continued his explorations to the mouth of the Mississippi River. See pages 53-84 of "Story of Illinois" and page 110 of Montgomery's "Leading Facts" for an account of LaSalle's exploits.

At present our county has 32 congressional townships (also called school townships) which were divided into 37 civil towns or townships for convenience in local government, when unbridged streams formed impassable barriers at some seasons of the year. Today we still have these 37 units of government as an inheritance from pioneer necessities.

GOVERNMENT SURVEYS.

In the original thirteen states land is still located and legally described in deeds and records by "meets and bounds" just as it was in Great Britain and the other countries of the colonists. But after the Revolutionary War, when the territory west of the Alleghany Mountains had been ceded to the federal government, it became necessary to find a simpler system of describing parcels of land before they were offered for sale. At the suggestion of Thomas Jefferson what is known as the township system of surveys was adopted. It provided

that all this new land should be surveyed in tracts six miles square, and these in turn be divided into sections one mile square.

But before any survey or measurement can be made, a beginning point must be selected. To establish such a beginning point, the government surveyors in Ohio, the first state to be platted under the new system, established a north and south line near the western boundary of that state and named it the First Principal Meridian. Then they established an east and west line in the northern part of the state, which is known as the Base Line. From the intersection of these two lines they laid off the townships six miles square. When Indiana was surveyed another north and south line, called the Second Principal Meridian was established and with it another Base Line. Later, when Illinois was platted the Third Principal Meridian (3rd P. M.) was surveyed from the mouth of the Ohio River due north, and the Indiana Base Line was extended across our state. It is situated about 100 miles north of the starting point of the 3rd P. M. and crosses the state about three miles south of Centralia.

The rows of townships laid off north or south of a base line are known as Township 1 North or Township 10 North, as the case may be. The rows of townships on each side of the Principal Meridian are also numbered, but these rows are known as "Ranges." Township 1 N., R. 1 E. 3rd P. M. is the first township north of the base line and the first township east of the Third Principal Meridian. Likewise, Tp. 31 N., R. 5 E. 3rd P. M. is the township in the 31st row north of the base line and is in the fifth range east of the Third Principal Meridian. It is one of the townships in LaSalle County. Find its name, also see if Township 32 N., R. 2 E. 3rd P. M. has a name. Locate the eight rows of townships in our county north of the base line and the five ranges of townships in it, east of the Third Principal Meridian. Practice designating townships by number and be sure that you can give the legal description used in designating your township.

It was intended that each township should contain exactly 36 square miles, but owing to errors in original surveys and to the fact that the north and south lines approach each other as they near the North Pole, few, if any, townships are exactly six miles square. To allow for these variations, all fractional sections are placed along the west side and the north edge of each township. The sections are numbered "across and back" beginning

at the northeast corner of the township. Learn to draw a township, divide it into 36 sections and number them correctly.

Every section is divided into four quarters by a line north and south through its center and another running east and west through the same point. The "quarter sections" (160 acres) may be divided in a similar manner into quarters of 40 acres each and these in turn into quarters of 10 acres each. Draw a two inch square to represent a section; divide it into quarters and write N. E., N. W., S. E. and S. W. in the proper squares. Divide the S. W. quarter into quarters and shade the one that is designated as the "N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$." See if you can show where the east half of the northwest quarter is located and tell how many acres it contains. Make a diagram of a section near your school, divide it into quarters, etc., and show how many acres are in each farm in that section.

AREA.

The 32 congressional townships that comprise our county would have an area of 1152 square miles, if each contained exactly 36 full sections, but for reasons already given the north line of the county is fully a half mile shorter than the south line, hence the true area of LaSalle County is 1146 square miles. This area ranks it second in size in the state, McLean County being the largest with 1191 square miles. However LaSalle County contains more land area than the state of Rhode Island with its 1067 square miles of land surface.

To find the principal cause of the shortened northern boundary, trace the tier of sections along the western edge of Otter Creek township to the northern line of Adams township. At the south it is a full mile wide, at the north less than a half mile wide. Such fractional sections were put in by the government surveyors to allow for the approach of north and south lines toward each other as they near the North Pole. These are called "Correction Lines" and are usually about 24 miles apart.

SURFACE.

The surface of LaSalle County is an undulating plain, having an elevation above sea level of from 400 feet on the banks of the Illinois River where it crosses the western boundary to about 800 feet in the northern

part of Mendota Township. In all probability there are other points in the county higher than the one mentioned, but data is not at hand to confirm it. The only hills in the county are the steep precipitous bluffs along the principal streams and rivers.

GEOLOGY.

Most of the rock layers underlying our county are comparatively level, but cutting across the county from the northwest to the southeast is a striking fold or displacement of this rock structure, known as the LaSalle Anticline. This fault, as it is sometimes called, makes a displacement of the strata of about 1000 feet, as can be seen, in part at least, by the dip of the rock layers at Split Rock. This fault is some five miles across, for the Magnesia limestone that outcrops at Utica is more than a thousand feet below the surface at LaSalle. Likewise, borings into the Potsdam limestone at Utica for artesian wells are about 100 feet, while similar wells at Peru have to be sunk over 1200 feet to reach the same rock layer.

South and west of the LaSalle Anticline the layers (strata) of lime rock, coal and clays of the Carboniferous Era (coal forming ages) underlie the glacial drift in fairly level seams. Some of the limestones of this rock group may be seen outcropping in the bluffs along the Vermillion from Lowell to Oglesby and along the Illinois from Split Rock to the western boundary beyond Peru. With these limestones are sufficient deposits of shale (clay) and of coal to burn them for the production of immense quantities of Portland cement.

COAL. The workable veins of coal in this area are from 250 to 400 feet below the surface. Several of the sixteen veins of coal recognized in Illinois coal fields are found here, but only two of them are thick enough (three to five feet) to be mined readily.

North and east of this anticline, there is but little coal and what there is is found near the surface in thin layers from a few inches to forty inches in thickness. This coal was mined in earlier days in the vicinity of Ottawa by removing four to ten feet of earth and quarrying the coal just as rock is removed.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the first authentic report of coal having been discovered in North America was made by Joliet and Marquette, who reported finding coal outcropping along the Illinois near

the mouth of the Fox in 1674. In 1679, Father Hennepin also recorded in his journal that coal was found near Ft. St. Louis, i. e. Starved Rock.

Near Utica is the highest point of the LaSalle Anticline along the Illinois. Here the geologic strata (rock layers) are elevated sufficiently to permit the Magnesia lime rock (belonging next below St. Peter sand rock) to outcrop. All of the rock layers above it have been removed by glacial action.

SAND ROCK. From Utica nearly to Marseilles, the St. Peter sand rock outcrops on both sides of the Illinois in precipitous bluffs, some over 100 feet high, and along the Fox from Ottawa to Millington and beyond, the same rock formation outcrops. St. Peter sand rock is composed of small grains of pure silica, loosely cemented together by magnesia. In its pure state it resembles granulated sugar, but in many places the magnesia is stained with iron oxide (iron rust) to varying shades of yellow and sometimes brown.

BUILDING STONE. Next above the St. Peter are deposits of Trenton lime stone which, in an early day, was quarried for building stone for foundations at Ottawa, Troy Grove, Sheridan and several points along the Vermillion. The best building stone, however, that the county ever produced was quarried from the carboniferous limestones at LaSalle and Peru, where one may still see buildings, constructed more than 80 years ago, that are made of this stone.

GLACIAL DRIFT. When the several sheets of glacial ice that covered this part of the state in remote ages, had receded, they left as a memento of their visit the ground-up stone (sand and gravel) and the various clays they had accumulated in regions farther north. This deposit of earthy material (known as glacial drift) covers nearly all of the state. In our own county, it varies in depth from a few inches to 300 feet as is evidenced by the drilling of the city wells at Mendota.

As these ice sheets melted, the waters spread the drift in horizontal layers but not of uniform thickness. In some places, the gravel beds are only a few inches thick while in others, notably at Sheridan and Serena, the gravel deposits are 40 feet in depth. The yellow clay, the lightest of the glacial deposits that remain, was deposited last and this, too, is of varying thickness from a

few inches to more than 10 feet. It is found in most parts of the county just below the black top soil.

SOIL.

When the last ice sheet (glacier) melted, a great shallow lake was formed covering much of Illinois and the states east and west of it. In this shallow lake, decayed vegetation accumulated and this formed our soil. As the water of this lake drained away, water courses were formed for our present streams. The rains ultimately washed the black soil from the hillsides and exposed the clay subsoil. It is in these areas along the streams that the early explorers and the first settlers found the heaviest growth of forest trees. Probably about one-fifth of the county was originally forested.

The other four-fifths of the county, apparently unsuited to the growth of trees under natural conditions, was covered with a heavy growth of wild grasses. From a French word meaning meadow, these grassy plains became known as prairies. They stretched for miles and miles with nothing in sight but weeds and grasses, except where they were dotted with ponds, especially on the watersheds between the smaller streams. The early settlers, coming as they did from timbered countries, did not believe that these prairies would ever be fit for anything except hay land and pastures, and the pond land, as they termed it, would never be fit for anything. But today drained and tiled, these very pond holes are our richest farm lands.

Nearly all the county, except the wide valley of the Illinois and the original forest areas, is covered with a brown silt loam (commonly called black dirt) from a few inches thick to two feet thick. This is recognized as one of the most fertile soils found in large areas anywhere in the world. Underlying this layer of black soil is a bed of friable yellow clay that forms a splendid moisture reservoir for growing crops.

DRAINAGE.

The excess rainfall of the county finds its way into the Illinois River through the small streams emptying into the larger ones and these in turn into that river. Practically all the pond lands have been ditched or tiled so that but little water is left standing in the fields except in the wettest seasons. The principal tributaries of the

Illinois in our county are the Fox from the north and the Vermillion from the south. The next largest streams are the Indian, the Little Vermillion and Covel Creek. Most of the smaller creeks are also named and pupils living near any one of them should study it sufficiently to know its source, its direction and the location of the mouth well enough to draw it on their outline map of the county.

CLIMATE.

TEMPERATURE. Located as it is in the north temperate zone, LaSalle County has the changeable climate so characteristic of inland regions of the same latitude in North America—very cold at times in winter and excessively hot for short periods in the summer. The temperature has an extreme range of 140 degrees, i. e., from 30 below zero to 110 above. It rarely touches these extremes, however, and the annual temperature is between 50 and 51 degrees. July with an average of 75 plus is our hottest month and January with 24 is our coldest month.

WINDS. The prevailing winds are from the west and southwest though in winter and spring they blow from the east and northeast quite frequently. Destructive storms are rare, but tornadoes and hail storms in summer and blizzards and sleet storms in winter have occurred frequently enough to make people apprehensive and to cause them to provide good shelter for themselves and their livestock.

MOISTURE. The rainfall in the county varies one year with another from 25 to 45 inches, but in general it is remarkably close to the annual average of 35 inches. Generally about 21 inches of this falls during the working season, April-September. With a frost free growing season of 168 days, a warm temperature, ample rainfall and fertile brown silt loam, our county has never experienced such crop failures as sometimes visit other portions of our country.

NATURAL RESOURCES.

Bituminous (soft) coal of good quality underlies about one-fourth of the county in veins from three to five feet thick and with a good roof. Coal cannot be mined unless there is a solid rock "roof" over it to prevent "caving in." Formerly, the coal industry employed 4000

miners in this county and thousands of cars of excellent coal were shipped from the big mines at Streator, Kangley, LaSalle, Peru, Oglesby, Rutland, Cedar Point and Wenona. At present, however, comparatively little is produced except for local use.

CLAY. Exceptionally fine clays are found along the anticline at Lowell where excellent pottery and splendid brick are manufactured and shipped to all parts of the country. At Ottawa are large deposits of clay that are used in making fire brick for lining furnaces in the steel mills and other plants, and for making hollow building tile used largely in Chicago in constructing skyscrapers. Elsewhere in the county are good clays for making drain tile and at Streator, a vitrified tile, burned to a glossy surface, is produced for sewer tile and paving bricks. Other clays, notably at LaSalle and Oglesby, are found in large deposits and are used as one of the ingredients in manufacturing Portland cement.

SANDROCK. The cliffs of St. Peter sandrock yield an abundant quantity of silica, the principal ingredient in making glass. It is also used in large quantities by the steel mills around Chicago; some of it is used in the manufacture of sodium silicate (water glass) and some of it is ground fine enough to be used as an abrading material for polishing and grinding hard metals.

GRAVEL. The gravel deposits in the glacial drift, notably at Sheridan, Serena, Ottawa and Marseilles, provide excellent material for concrete work, for graveling roads and for ballasting railroad tracks.

BUILDING STONE. In an earlier day much building stone was quarried for local use but most of it was in such thin layers that it was not suitable for shipping in commercial quantities and as time passed it was found that but little of it was durable enough, hence quarrying building stone in the county gradually ceased. However, quarrying limestone for making cement is carried on extensively at Oglesby, LaSalle and Utica.

LUMBER. Originally the forests of the county contained a great deal of timber (all hard woods) suitable for lumber. These forests contained walnut trees, oak trees and elm trees, five and six feet in diameter. These were sawed into lumber in primitive mills by the early settlers for their buildings, even large barns were covered

with beautiful black walnut and oak boards because cheaper material could not be obtained at that time. Hickory, oak and ash furnished good materials for wagons, agricultural implements and handles for tools. But today, the original forests are but a memory and only little of the "second growth" is large enough for any purpose, except fuel, fence posts and mine props.

SCENIC PLACES.

Nowhere in the midwest can one find such picturesque scenery as the canyons and the cliffs near Starved Rock, especially the Deer Park canyon. The state very wisely purchased a strip of land along the south side of the Illinois River extending from the Utica road up the river some four miles for a public park. It includes Starved Rock, Lovers Leap, Pulpit Rock and nearly all the canyons. The Crane Company of Chicago, donated some 50 acres at the east end of Buffalo Rock, which it formerly used as a sanitarium for its convalescing workmen, to the state for park purposes.

Bailey's Falls, about six miles south of Starved Rock, is one of the most beautiful spots in the state. It, too, has been recently dedicated to public use, and it is hoped that the state will add to it by acquiring the bluffs on either side of the Vermillion between there and Lowell. The sandrock cliffs, with their cedar trimmings, along the Fox from Wedron to Sheridan, possess a fascinating beauty of their own. Likewise, The Glen, three miles north of LaSalle, where the Tomahawk empties into the Little Vermillion, is a scenic spot well worth visiting.

POPULATION.

When first organized, LaSalle County probably did not have a population of more than 500, but during the 40's and 50's many settlers from New England, New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio established homes within its borders. A large colony of Norwegians settled in the northeast part of the county in the 40's, and early in the 50's many Germans, who had to leave their native land on account of the uprising in 1848, likewise founded homes in our county. The potato famine in Ireland in 1846 drove a multitude of her people to seek homes in America. Many of those that came to this section helped construct the Illinois and Michigan Canal and when that was completed they took up government land and be-

came permanent residents. After the European Wars of 1860-1870, the Poles, finding the rule of Russia, Austria and Germany oppressive, sought homes in America. Many of them settled in LaSalle and Peru and added materially to the population and prosperity of the Twin Cities. The only distinct Scotch settlement in the county is in Waltham Township, where a number of this nationality settled about 1860. It will be an interesting exercise for each school to find who was the first settler in that township, when the township was organized and how it received its name.

The census of 1930 gives our county a population of 97,695 and the principal cities a population of: Streator, 14,728; LaSalle, 13,149; Ottawa, 15,094; Peru, 9,121; Oglesby, 3,910; Mendota, 1,008; and Marseilles 4,292. Compare our population with that of Nevada.

In the last three or four census enumerations, our county has not gained as rapidly in population as it did in earlier decades. Some of the rural townships have scarcely half the population they had in 1870 or 1880. Many of the former inhabitants moved to western states where land was cheaper, and others moved to town until the decrease in rural population almost equalled the increase in the cities.

PLACE NAMES.

It is hoped that the following partial list of place names of the county will enthuse others to find out and report on other local names:

CEDAR POINT—from a high hill at the mouth of Cedar Creek.

DANA—in honor of the general superintendent of the railroad built through that place.

DAYTON—in remembrance of the early settler's home, Dayton, Ohio.

EARLVILLE—after the village of Earl, New York.

GARFIELD—in honor of Gen. Garfield, who afterward became president.

GRAND RIDGE—in recognition of the two adjacent townships, Grand Rapids and Farm Ridge.

HARDING—complimentary to the first pastor, Rev. Chas. Harding.

KANGLEY—in honor of the owner of the first coal mine there.

LASALLE—in honor of the French explorer, LaSalle.

LELAND—complimentary to the first postmaster, John Leland Adams.

LOSTANT—in honor of the Countess of L'Ostant, wife of a French minister to the United States.

LOWELL—after Lowell, Massachusetts.

MARSEILLES—by the president of the first waterway company.

MENDOTA—an Indian name meaning the junction or crossing of trails, because two of the pioneer railroads intersect here.

MERIDEN—after Meriden, Connecticut.

MILLINGTON—because of the mill sites on the Fox.

NORWAY—in honor of the native country of the first settlers.

OGLESBY—in honor of Richard Oglesby, governor of Illinois.

OTTAWA—name of a tribe of Indians in Michigan.

PERU—meaning “wealth” in the language of the Inca Indians.

RANSOM—in honor of Col. Ransom of Civil War fame.

RUTLAND—after Rutland, Vermont.

SENECA—name of a tribe of Indians in New York.

SERENA—same as township in which it is located.

SHERIDAN—in honor of Gen. Phil Sheridan.

STAVANGER—after a noted seaport in Norway.

STREATOR—in honor of Dr. W. S. Streator, president of the coal mining company organized in that city.

TONICA—after a chief of an Indian tribe in Massachusetts.

TRIUMPH—named by the post office department.

TROY GROVE—after Troy, New York.

UTICA—after Utica, New York.

INDUSTRIES.

AGRICULTURE. With more than 4000 families engaged in grain farming and stock raising and with an invested capital of \$220,000,000, agriculture is easily the largest and the most important industry that engages the attention and energies of our people. The federal census shows that of the 733,440 acres of land in the county, about 660,000 are tillable; 45,000 are still classed as woodland and 20,000 are unimproved. Our county usually raises about 265,000 acres of corn; 165,000 acres of oats; 25,000 acres of wheat and about 40,000 acres of hay and uses 125,000 acres for pasture. The remainder is de-

voted to minor crops, such as barley, rye, soy beans, buckwheat and potatoes, and to such purposes as orchards, farmsteads and town sites.

It is interesting to know that the 600 acres of potatoes usually grown in the county produce but a fraction of what is consumed by our people. (Where do the rest come from principally?) The 30,000 bushels of apples raised supply only a small portion of what is used in the county, largely because the home grown fruit does not receive sufficient cultural attention to make the crop marketable.

In 1930, the census shows that LaSalle County had 61,000 hogs; 48,000 cattle; 20,000 horses and 21,000 sheep. It also shows that we had 850 mules and 103 goats.

Dairying is a branch of agriculture that is increasing substantially and, no doubt, in time will occupy more and more of the attention of the farm population. Market gardening, too, may well be considered an integral part of agriculture for it is conducted on a commercial scale in the vicinity of each of the larger cities, asparagus and green peas being shipped daily in car load lots from Ottawa, during the season of each. Try making a list of crops grown by the market gardeners.

GLASS. After washing the magnesia from the crushed St. Peter sandrock, the pure silica remaining is the principal ingredient used in making all kinds of glass. In the 70's and 80's, LaSalle and Ottawa were important centers in the production of window glass and lamp chimneys, but the discovery of natural gas in Indiana caused these plants to be moved there to secure cheaper fuel.

In more recent years, plate glass making has become a flourishing industry at Ottawa. The Federal and National plants, subsidiaries of the General Motors Corporation, are rated among the largest in the United States. A new plant for the production of "shatterless" glass for windshields is awaiting better times before being perfected. These plants can mould and polish some 40,000 square feet of plate glass a day. (How many acres?)

At Streator, several firms use this washed sand (silica) in making bottles, especially milk bottles. Streator ranks as one of the largest centers for the production of this commodity in the United States.

ZINC. Even though zinc is not found in LaSalle County, it has been smelted and rolled at LaSalle since about 1856, when two German youths, Messrs. Mathiesen and Hegler, came to this country seeking a place to manufacture zinc. They found that zinc ore was a refuse product of the lead mines around Galena, but the nearest coal fields were at LaSalle, and inasmuch as it required about three cars of coal to smelt a car of zinc ore, they decided to establish their plant at LaSalle. In the development of this plant, at one time the largest in America, it became the parent of several others in Illinois, notably those at Peru, DePue and Danville.

Much of the ore now used in the plant at Peru as well as the one at LaSalle is obtained from the Joplin district in southwestern Missouri and from Mineral Point, Wisconsin. It is cast into spelter (cakes suitable for making castings and alloys) and rolled into sheets for structural work. These two plants can produce 75-100 tons of high grade zinc a day.

CEMENT. Two kinds of cement are produced in this county, Portland cement at Oglesby and LaSalle, and hydraulic (sometimes called "natural") cement at Utica. The Portland cement is made from limestone and shale (clay) burned to a cinder together and then pulverized as fine as flour. It can be used for all purposes where solidity is required, both in air and in water. The two plants at Oglesby and the one at LaSalle can produce 25,000 barrels of cement a day. A large portion of the cement used in building the 7000 miles of concrete roads in Illinois was manufactured by these three plants. It is also used in constructing large bridges, buildings, retaining walls, and for lining tunnels and making foundations for buildings.

Hydraulic cement is made by incinerating certain layers of the magnesia limestone that outcrops at Utica, the only place where this rock appears above the surface in Illinois. This cement is excellent for foundations, bridge piers and abutements, that are constantly moist. In rebuilding Chicago after "the great fire" in 1871, the Utica plants furnished practically all the cement and during that period Utica was one of the largest producers of cement in this country.

TIME PIECES. The largest clock works in the United States, and probably in the world, are located at

Peru, where "Big Ben", "Little Ben" and all their relations begin their ticking career of waking people on time and keeping them on time. These time pieces have a reputation for excellence that is world wide and they richly deserve it, for the plant in which they are made is the best example of scientific mass production that can be found in the United States. In normal times the Westclox factory employ 3,000 people and it produces about 50,000 time pieces every day.

PAPER. Because it possesses the greatest water power of any city in Illinois, Marseilles is noted for its production of box board and roofing paper. The National Biscuit Company maintains one of its largest carton factories there and the Certaineed Roofing has one of its twelve plants there, too. It would be an interesting project to visit these places and "write-up" what was observed by both teachers and pupils.

CLAY PRODUCTS. One of the oldest potteries in the midwest is located at Lowell, where the anticline has brought clays, ordinarily hundreds of feet below the surface within easy reach. This clay is of such exceptionally fine quality that Lorado Taft, the great sculptor, finds its particularly well suited for modeling. An art firm of national standing is using the ornamental vases this factory produces in preference to any other for artistic and decorative purposes.

Lowell also possesses an excellent clay for manufacturing face brick for building purposes, and the 20-kiln plant established there finds a ready market for its "Ristocrat" brick in normal times.

At Ottawa, a shale (hard clay) lies near enough the surface to be mined with steam shovels. This clay is used in the manufacture of hollow building tile, that are highly prized in the erection of skyscrapers in Chicago, whence it has been shipped in carload and even train load lots.

Another grade of this clay is used to make fire brick, so essential for lining smelting furnaces and retorts in which metals are fused. Most clays will melt in such intense heat but the fire brick made from this clay has withstood every test thus far. With these clays is a vein of coal that provides the fuel for firing the kilns.

While the plant for producing vitrified paving blocks and sewer tile at Streator is really located just

across the line in Livingston County, it rates as a Streator industry, hence is of special interest to LaSalle County. This clay mixed with silica sand is burned to a point where the two ingredients begin to fuse. This gives it a hardness and an imperviousness that are so essential in paving blocks and sewer tile. This clay also produces an exceptionally fine quality of dark colored face brick for building purposes.

A generation ago when farmers were busy draining the ponds and sloughs of the prairie lands, drain tile (unglazed and unvitified) was used in large quantities, and was manufactured at a number of points in the county. Now that these lands are practically all tiled, the demand for this product has fallen off until there are but a few of the former tile yards in operation.

AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS. In an early day every village and city had its blacksmith shops and its wagon shops where practically every implement used on the farm could be fashioned by hand. Later some of these developed into quite extensive plants for the manufacture of wagons, carriages, plows, cultivators, corn-shellers, hayforks, but factory made goods gradually drove them from the field with cheaper prices. However, today the plow works at Peru, the corn sheller factory at Ottawa and the surface cultivator plant at Mendota are able to hold their own through the superiority of their wares.

TRANSPORTATION.

Commerce, the exchange of products of one region with another, is more dependent upon transportation than any other factor. It is equally true that as the means of transportation improve commerce increases and the prosperity and welfare of a people is advanced. LaSalle County, like the rest of the inland regions of the midwest, could not develop beyond a very primitive mode of life until adequate transportation facilities had been established. Canoe and keelboat, ox-cart and pack horse, were too slow and too uncertain to give the people of our county commercial connection with the rest of the country. It is not surprising, then, that visionary schemes were entertained in earlier days, and frenzied efforts made to secure dependable transportation facilities between this region and the outside world, especially with

the eastern seaboard, where the great bulk of the population still lived.

Those of our early settlers who were reared in New England and New York came by way of the Erie Canal on horse drawn packet boats to Buffalo, thence by steamer to Chicago, completing their journey with team and wagon purchased in that city. Many of those from Pennsylvania and Ohio came in ox-carts and covered wagons, even horse-back, and spent from six weeks to two months making the trip. Others came from these states by way of the Ohio, thence up the Mississippi and Illinois by steamer to Peru, the head of navigation. Whichever method was used, it meant a long, tiresome trip and the loss of a season's crop, for such a migration had to be made in the summer time.

But these trials were but the beginning of their difficulties, for even though each family had to rely upon its own efforts and ingenuity to provide shelter, food and clothing for its members, some essentials, such as salt, sugar, cotton goods, and iron and steel for tools, had to be purchased. At first, Chicago was the only place where they could exchange what they could spare for the things they needed. Wheat, cradled, flailed and winnowed by hand labor, was the principal commodity they could offer, but transporting it to Chicago in home made wagons was a herculean task. Over swampy prairies, through tangled forests and across unbridged streams was enough to test the fortitude and the resourcefulness of the best. Yet they accomplished this feat of transportation, sometimes in a week under fortunate conditions, otherwise two weeks or more according to the difficulties that beset the way. Frequently all that could be purchased from the proceeds of a load of wheat (20-30 bushels) could be brought home in an ordinary grain sack. The 30's and 40's were trying times.

Then came the Illinois and Michigan Canal, the most important factor in populating our county, for no settlements were made in it until the route of this waterway was quite definitely determined by the government. Then in the 30's, after the Black Hawk War, people began to settle in LaSalle County, choosing locations within driving distance of the proposed canal in increasing numbers. However, actual work on the canal was not begun until 1836. Then the financial panic of 1837-38 nearly wrecked the enterprise, but in the spring of 1848

this important link in transportation was completed. For forty years or more, it aided very materially in the development and prosperity of this county, probably more than any other agency. But since the early 90's, the Illinois and Michigan Canal has fallen into disuse and that part of it from Lockport to Chicago has been abandoned.

The second great improvement in the transportation facilities of our county was the building of the Illinois Central Railroad from the mouth of the Ohio River to the western terminus of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, with a branch to Galena and another to Chicago. Its construction was made possible in 1850 by the federal government's donating the even numbered sections of public land six miles wide on each side of a right of way that was given outright. The proceeds of the 3,000,000 acres of land thus granted provided the funds necessary to construct the road. In its charter, however, it was obligated to pay 7 per cent of its gross income in lieu of taxes and to transport federal troops free of charge. The first of these provisions yields the state about \$1,000,000 per year at the present time. The completed road was opened in ample time to be of tremendous service to the country in transporting troops and munitions during the Civil War.

The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad was completed to Peru in the spring of 1853 and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad to Mendota in the fall of 1854. LaSalle County had gained undreamed of transportation in the short space of six years, 1848-54. Its pioneer days were past and its future development and prosperity assured, for adequate transportation facilities had given it close connection with all parts of the Union.

The Fox River branch of the "Q" from Aurora to Streator was opened to traffic in 1870; the branch of the Alton through Streator and Wenona, the same year, and what is now the main line of the Santa Fe, originally projected through Marseilles, was completed in 1875.

What was formerly known as the "Three I" road through Streator and west, now a branch of the New York Central system, was finished in 1883; the Paw Paw branch of the "Q" in 1884; the branch of the Northwestern from DeKalb to Spring Valley in 1886; the Illinois and Northern branch of the "Q" from Streator through LaSalle and Peru was put into operation about the same

time; and the branch of the Milwaukee and St. Paul from Rockford to Oglesby was built in 1904. Including the Illinois Valley electric railroad, our county has about 300 miles of railroad in operation, sufficient to meet its needs more adequately than ever entered the dreams of the most enthusiastic pioneer.

HIGHWAYS. Due to the general use of the automobile in comparatively recent years, another system of transportation, the concrete highway, has come into well merited favor. At the present time, LaSalle County has 225 miles of paved roads outside the cities and over 25 miles more is contemplated. Supplementing these trunk lines of paved highways are miles and miles of well gravelled and well patrolled roads, sufficient at least so that any point in the county can be reached readily at almost any season of the year. This system of local road improvement, the final link in our transportation system, is moving forward rapidly as the county and the townships modernize their highways.

NEW WATERWAY. Since the decline of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in the early 90's, it has been the dream of many of the people of this state to make the upper part of the Illinois River a navigable stream for barges that do not require more than nine feet of water. The main purpose of the project was to provide the necessary connecting link in a waterway from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi and thence to the Gulf of Mexico. A lock 600 feet long and 110 feet wide with a lift of 14 feet has been constructed west of Marseilles and a 200-foot canal two miles long has been completed to connect it with the pool above the dam at that city. A concrete bear-trap dam, 1000 feet long, has been built just east of Starved Rock to raise the water level 16-20 feet at that point, to give sufficient depth for barges to the Marseilles lock. At the north end of this dam a lock of the same dimensions as the one described above has been constructed.

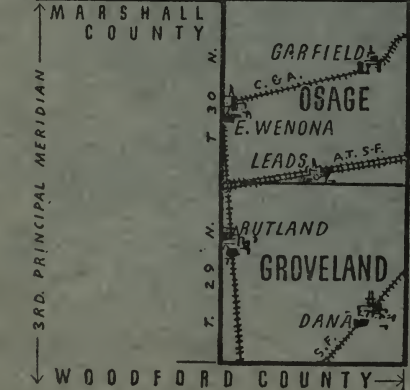
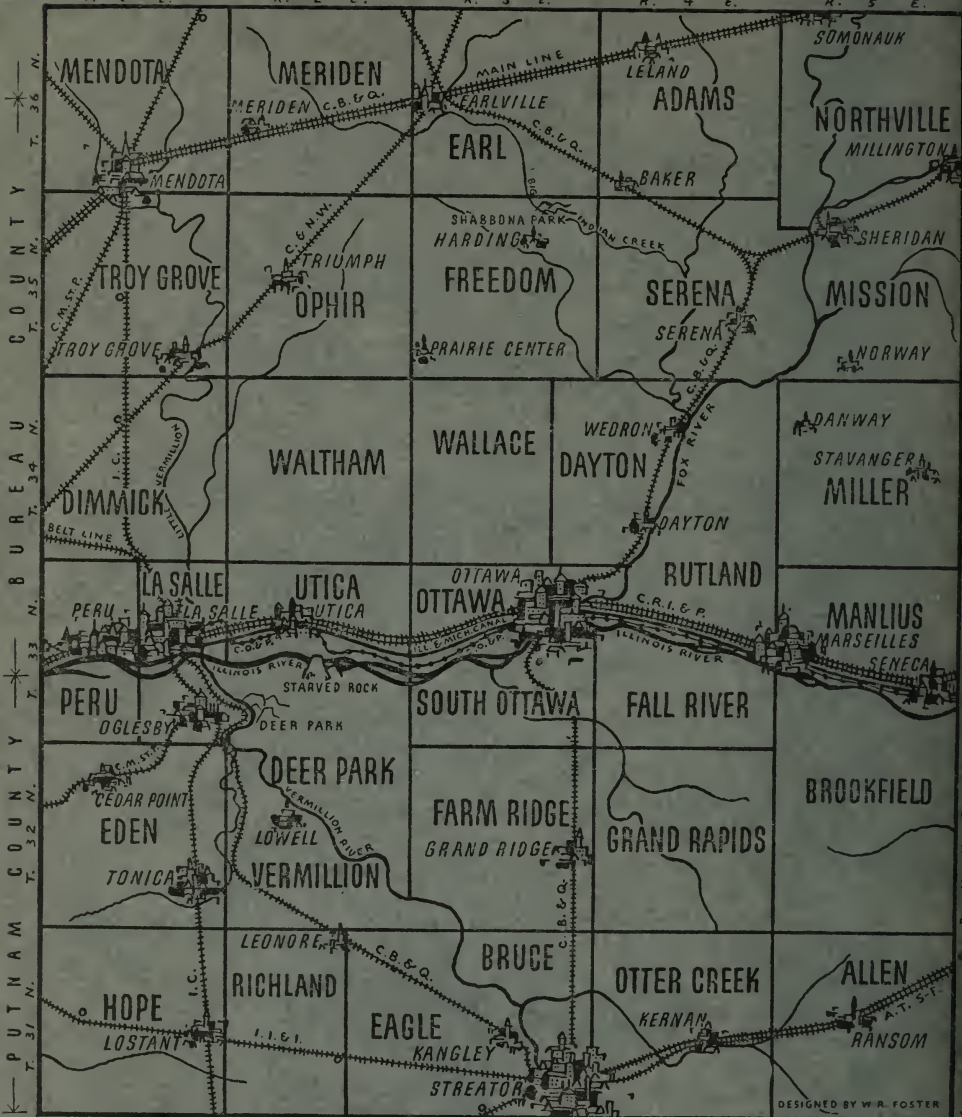
This project to canalize the upper reaches of the Illinois and that part of the Des Plaines below Joliet, begun in 1923, was financed with a bond issue of \$20,000,000, but this sum proved insufficient by nearly \$10,000,000, so the undertaking was turned over to the federal government in 1930. The War Department, which has charge of this work, has already dredged and cleared the

river from its mouth to the dam at Utica and is now dredging the several pools of back-water above the dams at Starved Rock, Marseilles, Brandon Road and Dresden Heights. According to present plans, this seaway, as it is sometimes called, will be ready for use by midsummer 1933.

EDUCATIONAL.

For school purposes, LaSalle County is divided into 282 school districts not including the Non-High School District—242 of these maintain one room schools; 16 are village schools of two to four rooms; 12 are city schools under boards of education; and 12 are township and community high schools. These school enrolled 17,690 pupils in 1931-32, but 4,158 of these were attending the 18 high schools in the county. One school, the LaSalle-Peru Township High School maintains an excellent junior college where one may obtain the first two years of college work at a very nominal cost. The pupils in all these schools are housed in 314 buildings that represent an investment of nearly \$6,000,000 and it costs a million and a half dollars a year to give them an opportunity to gain an education, and thereby become useful members of society—dependable, resourceful citizens of the best government man has ever devised.

LEE COUNTY R. 1 E. R. 2 E. R. 3 E. DE KALB COUNTY R. 4 E. R. 5 E.



LIVINGSTON COUNTY



LA SALLE COUNTY ILLINOIS

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